

## Fevers

Online version with active resource links at: <http://cancer-help.me/fever>

### Have a temperature over 98.6° F?

People with cancer are more prone to fevers, especially during treatment. A fever may be a sign of an infection. If you get a fever during your chemotherapy treatment, it may be a medical emergency.

Fever may be the only sign that you have an infection, and an infection during chemotherapy can be life-threatening. Sometimes a very low temperature (94-95 °F) while feeling very sick can also be a sign of infection.

Having an idea of when it is important for you to contact your doctor or seek immediate attention is critical when it pertains to fevers. Often, it is better to err on the side of caution.

Sometimes symptoms are easier to treat and can be managed more effectively earlier rather than later. Typically, your oncology on-call service is equipped to handle these calls 24/7.

Content adapted from websites below.

**Anytime** you feel warm, flushed, chilled, or not well,  
...you should take your temperature.

**Contact your health care provider immediately, no matter the time of day or night, if you experience any of the following symptoms:**

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher  
*or*
- A temperature of 95° or below  
*or*
- Shaking chills (possible signs of infection)

**If you go to the emergency room:**

- Tell the person checking you in that you are a cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy.
- If you have a fever, you might have an infection in the setting of a very low white blood cell count. This is a life-threatening condition, and you should be seen quickly.

**Tips for managing fever potential:**

- Encourage visitors, family, friends who are sick (examples: fever, a cold, diarrhea, a cough, flu) or not feeling well to social distance and contact only by phone or electronic device until they are well again.
- Ask visitors to wear a face mask and to wash their hands
- Keep a working thermometer (w/ new battery if battery powered) in a convenient location, know how to use it.
- Keep your doctor's phone numbers with you at all times. Know what number to call when their office is open and when closed.
- Know your temperature before you call the on-call doctor so you can report the number to the provider immediately.

**Prevention of fevers and infection –Clean your hands with soap and water and/or hand sanitizer:**

- before, during and after cooking
- before and after you eat
- after returning from anywhere outside your home
- going to the bathroom
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- after touching or cleaning up after pet; after touching trash
- before / after caring for a wound
- before / after caring for your port, catheter or other access device.

### Resources for Additional Information:

- [Cancer.Net, When to Call the Doc During Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Infection](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Fever](#)
- [CDC, Prepare: Watch out for Fever](#)
- [NIH, NCI Infection and Neutropenia](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Neutropenia and Infections](#)
- [Chemocare, Fever and Chemotherapy](#)

### Recursos en Español:

- [Cancer.Net, Cuando llamar al médico durante el tratamiento para el cáncer](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Infección](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Fiebre](#)
- [NIH, NCI Infección y neutropenia durante el tratamiento del cáncer](#)
- [Chemocare, Fiebre, fiebre neutropénica y su relación con la quimioterapia](#)